

Claims

1. A method for displaying video streams received from multiple terminals linked by a network, the method comprising:

5 receiving a plurality of video streams at a network terminal;

simultaneously displaying the video streams in a user interface provided by the network terminal;

ranking at least a portion of the video streams according to a set of ranking criteria, and

10 arranging at least a portion of the displayed video streams in order of rank.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

detecting a scene change within a first video stream; and

promoting the first video stream to a higher rank.

15 3. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one video stream comprises a scene change, and wherein at least a portion of the video streams are ranked according to recency of scene changes.

20 4. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one video stream comprises a scene change, and wherein at least a portion of the video streams are ranked according to frequency of scene changes.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the video streams are ranked according to popularity.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one video stream is promoted to a higher rank in response to the time of day.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one video stream is promoted to a higher rank in response to the day of the week.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one video stream is promoted to a higher rank in response to information contained within a user's calendar.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein displaying comprises:
displaying the video streams in a grid format in the user interface.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein a video stream displayed near the top of the user interface has a higher rank than a video stream displayed near the bottom of the user interface.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein a video stream displayed near the left side of the user interface has a higher rank than a video stream displayed near the right side of the user interface.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein displaying comprises:
displaying the video streams in a ticker format in the user interface.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the ticker format comprises a moving
5 carousel having a beginning position and an ending position, and wherein a video
stream displayed near the beginning position has a higher rank than a video stream
displayed near the ending position.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein displaying comprises:
10 emphasizing the video stream of highest rank.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein emphasizing comprises:
enlarging the video stream of highest rank as displayed on the user interface
relative to the other video streams.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the network comprises one of a cable
network and a direct satellite broadcast (DBS) network.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the terminal comprises an interactive
20 television system.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one video stream comprises a
broadcast television program.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one video stream comprises live video generated by a webcam.

5 20. A system for displaying video streams received from multiple terminals linked by a network, the system comprising:

a stream reception component configured to receive a plurality of video streams at a network terminal;

10 a stream display component configured to simultaneously display the video streams in a user interface provided by the network terminal; and

a stream ranking component configured to rank at least a portion of the video streams according to a set of ranking criteria, and wherein the stream display component is configured to arrange at least a portion of the displayed video streams in order of rank.

15 21. The system of claim 20, wherein the stream ranking component is configured to detect a scene change within a first video stream and to promote the first video stream to a higher rank.

20 22. The system of claim 20, wherein at least one video stream comprises a scene change, and wherein the stream ranking component is configured to rank at least a portion of the video streams according to recency of scene changes.

23. The system of claim 20, wherein at least one video stream comprises a scene change, and wherein the stream ranking component is configured to rank at least a portion of the video streams according to frequency of scene changes.

5 24. The system of claim 20, wherein the stream ranking component is configured to rank the video streams according to popularity.

10 25. The system of claim 20, wherein the stream ranking component is configured to promote at least one video stream to a higher rank in response to the time of day.

15 26. The system of claim 20, wherein the stream ranking component is configured to promote at least one video stream to a higher rank in response to the day of the week.

27. The system of claim 20, wherein the stream ranking component is configured to promote at least one video stream to a higher rank in response to information contained within a user's calendar.

20 28. The system of claim 20, wherein the stream display component is configured to display the video streams in a grid format in the user interface.

29. The system of claim 28, wherein a video stream displayed near the top of the user interface has a higher rank than a video stream displayed near the bottom of the user interface.

5 30. The system of claim 28, wherein a video stream displayed near the left side of the user interface has a higher rank than a video stream displayed near the right side of the user interface.

31. The system of claim 20, wherein the stream display component is
10 configured to arrange the video streams in a ticker format in the user interface.

32. The system of claim 31, wherein the ticker format comprises a moving
carousel having a beginning position and an ending position, and wherein a video
stream displayed near the beginning position has a higher rank than a video stream
15 displayed near the ending position.

33. The system of claim 20, wherein the stream display component is
configured to emphasize a video stream of highest rank.

20 34. The system of claim 33, wherein the stream display component is
configured to enlarge the video stream of highest rank as displayed on the user
interface relative to the other video streams.

35. The system of claim 20, wherein the network comprises one of a cable network and a direct satellite broadcast (DBS) network.

36. The system of claim 20, wherein the terminal comprises an interactive television system.

37. The system of claim 20, wherein at least one video stream comprises a broadcast television program.

38. The system of claim 20, wherein at least one video stream comprises live video generated by a webcam.

39. A computer program product comprising program code for performing a method for displaying video streams received from multiple terminals linked by a network, the method comprising:

receiving a plurality of video streams at a network terminal;

simultaneously displaying the video streams in a user interface provided by the network terminal;

ranking at least a portion of the video streams according to a set of ranking criteria, and

arranging at least a portion of the displayed video streams in order of rank.

40. The computer program product of claim 39, further comprising:

detecting a scene change within a first video stream; and
promoting the first video stream to a higher rank.

41. The computer program product of claim 39, wherein at least one video
stream comprises a scene change, and wherein at least a portion of the video
streams are ranked according to recency of scene changes.

42. The computer program product of claim 39, wherein at least one video
stream comprises a scene change, and wherein at least a portion of the video
streams are ranked according to frequency of scene changes.

43. The computer program product of claim 39, wherein the video streams
are ranked according to popularity.

44. The computer program product of claim 39, wherein at least one video
stream is promoted to a higher rank in response to the time of day.

45. The computer program product of claim 39, wherein at least one video
stream is promoted to a higher rank in response to the day of the week.

46. The computer program product of claim 39, wherein at least one video
stream is promoted to a higher rank in response to information contained within a
user's calendar.

47. The computer program product of claim 39, wherein displaying comprises:

displaying the video streams in a grid format in the user interface.

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48. The computer program product of claim 47, wherein a video stream displayed near the top of the user interface has a higher rank than a video stream displayed near the bottom of the user interface.

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49. The computer program product of claim 47, wherein a video stream displayed near the left side of the user interface has a higher rank than a video stream displayed near the right side of the user interface.

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50. The computer program product of claim 39, wherein displaying comprises:

displaying the video streams in a ticker format in the user interface.

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51. The computer program product of claim 50, wherein the ticker format comprises a moving carousel having a beginning position and an ending position, and wherein a video stream displayed near the beginning position has a higher rank than a video stream displayed near the ending position.

52. The computer program product of claim 39, wherein displaying comprises:

emphasizing the video stream of highest rank.

5 53. The computer program product of claim 52, wherein emphasizing comprises:

enlarging the video stream of highest rank as displayed on the user interface relative to the other video streams.

10 54. The computer program product of claim 39, wherein the network comprises one of a cable network and a direct satellite broadcast (DBS) network.

55. The computer program product of claim 39, wherein the terminal comprises an interactive television system.

15 56. The computer program product of claim 39, wherein at least one video stream comprises a broadcast television program.

57. The computer program product of claim 39, wherein at least one video
20 stream comprises live video generated by a webcam.

58. A method for displaying video streams received from multiple webcams linked by a network, the method comprising:

receiving a plurality of video streams at an interactive television system coupled to the network;

simultaneously displaying the video streams in a user interface provided by the interactive television system;

5 ranking at least a portion of the video streams according to a user-defined set of ranking criteria;

arranging at least a portion of the displayed video streams in the user interface in order of rank;

detecting a change of scene within a first video stream;

10 promoting the first video stream to a higher rank; and

re-arranging at least a portion of the displayed video streams in the user interface in order of rank.

59. A system for displaying video streams received from multiple webcams
15 linked by a network, the method comprising:

a stream reception component configured to receive a plurality of video streams at an interactive television system coupled to the network;

a stream display component configured to simultaneously displaying the video streams in a user interface provided by the interactive television system;

20 a stream ranking component configured to rank at least a portion of the video streams according to a user-defined set of ranking criteria;

wherein the stream display component is further configured to arrange at least a portion of the displayed video streams in the user interface in order of rank;

wherein the stream reception component is further configured to detect a change of scene within a first video stream;

wherein the stream ranking component is further configured to promote the first video stream to a higher rank; and

5 wherein the stream display component is further configured to re-arrange at least a portion of the displayed video streams in the user interface in order of rank.

60. A system for displaying video streams received from multiple terminals linked by a network, the system comprising:

10 means for receiving a plurality of video streams at a network terminal;

means for simultaneously displaying the video streams in a user interface provided by the network terminal;

means for ranking at least a portion of the video streams according to a set of ranking criteria, and

15 means for arranging at least a portion of the displayed video streams in order of rank.

61. A system for displaying video streams received from multiple webcams linked by a network, the system comprising:

20 means for receiving a plurality of video streams at an interactive television system coupled to the network;

means for simultaneously displaying the video streams in a user interface provided by the interactive television system;

means for ranking at least a portion of the video streams according to a user-defined set of ranking criteria;

means for arranging at least a portion of the displayed video streams in the user interface in order of rank;

5 means for detecting a change of scene within a first video stream;

means for promoting the first video stream to a higher rank; and

means for re-arranging at least a portion of the displayed video streams in the user interface in order of rank.

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